



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
Department of Planning & Community Development  
730 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, Massachusetts 02476

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## **Public Hearing Memorandum**

*The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Arlington Redevelopment Board and public with technical information and a planning analysis to assist with the regulatory decision-making process.*

**To:** Arlington Redevelopment Board

**From:** Claire V. Ricker, Secretary Ex Officio

**Subject:** Environmental Design Review, 1306-1308 Massachusetts Ave, Arlington, MA  
Docket #3760

**Date:** August 28, 2023

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### **I. Docket Summary**

This is an application by RB Farina Roofing & Co., 1319 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington MA 02476 to operate an office space at 1306-1308 Massachusetts Avenue. The opening of the Special Permit is to allow the Board to review and approve the change of use from retail to a commercial office of greater than 3,000 square feet in the B3 Village Business, and signage under Section 3.4 Environmental Design Review (EDR). The prior use of the property was a dry cleaner, a retail use that had been in place for several years.

Materials submitted for consideration of this application:

- Application for EDR Special Permit;
- Dimensional and Parking Information
- Existing and Proposed Floor Plans
- Site Plan;
- Proposed interior build out drawings; and
- Sign Submittal Package

### **II. Application of Special Permit Criteria (Arlington Zoning Bylaw, Section 3.3)**

#### **1. Section 3.3.3.A.**

**The use requested is listed as a Special Permit in the use regulations for the applicable district or is so designated elsewhere in this Bylaw.**

A commercial office of 3,000 square feet or more is allowed in the B3 Village Business District with a Special Permit under the jurisdiction of the ARB due to its location on Massachusetts Avenue. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**2. Section 3.3.3.B.**

**The requested use is essential or desirable to the public convenience or welfare.**

The building is currently vacant; thus the proposed office use is in the public's interest by offering professional services and contributing to local economic growth. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**3. Section 3.3.3.C.**

**The requested use will not create undue traffic congestion or unduly impair pedestrian safety.**

This is a commercial office with limited client visits. The proposed office space is unlikely to create undue traffic congestion or unduly impair pedestrian safety. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**4. Section 3.3.3.D.**

**The requested use will not overload any public water, drainage or sewer system or any other municipal system to such an extent that the requested use or any developed use in the immediate area or in any other area of the Town will be unduly subjected to hazards affecting health, safety, or the general welfare.**

The proposed office use does not promote high demand for water or sewer. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**5. Section 3.3.3.E.**

**Any special regulations for the use as may be provided in the Bylaw are fulfilled.**

The proposed office use requires no special regulations. The Board can find this condition is met.

**6. Section 3.3.3.F.**

**The requested use will not impair the integrity or character of the district or adjoining districts, nor be detrimental to the health or welfare.**

There has been a vacant commercial storefront at this location for several years, the proposed office use is low intensity with limited anticipated client visits and has no detrimental impact on the integrity or character of the neighborhood, district, or

adjoining districts, or on the health and welfare of the community. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**7. Section 3.3.3.G.**

**The requested use will not, by its addition to a neighborhood, cause an excess of the use that could be detrimental to the character of said neighborhood.**

The proposed commercial office use will not cause an excess of office use in the area. The Board can find this condition is met.

**III. Environmental Design Review Standards (Arlington Zoning Bylaw, Section 3.4)**

**1. EDR-1 Preservation of Landscape**

**The landscape shall be preserved in its natural state, insofar as practicable, by minimizing tree and soil removal, and any grade changes shall be in keeping with the general appearance of neighboring developed areas.**

There are no proposed changes to the landscape or grading of the site. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**2. EDR-2 Relation of the Building to the Environment**

**Proposed development shall be related harmoniously to the terrain and to the use, scale, and architecture of the existing buildings in the vicinity that have functional or visible relationship to the proposed buildings. The Arlington Redevelopment Board may require a modification in massing so as to reduce the effect of shadows on the abutting property in an R0, R1 or R2 district or on public open space.**

By considering the limited client visits, off-peak hours, location considerations, the requested use of an office space for a roofing company is unlikely to create undue traffic congestion or unduly impair pedestrian safety.

**3. EDR-3 Open Space**

**All open space (landscaped and usable) shall be so designed as to add to the visual amenities of the vicinity by maximizing its visibility for persons passing by the site or overlooking it from nearby properties. The location and configuration of usable open space shall be so designed as to encourage social interaction, maximize its utility and facilitate maintenance.**

There are no changes proposed to the existing building site and currently no open space on the project site. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**4. EDR-4 Circulation**

**With respect to vehicular and pedestrian and bicycle circulation, including entrances, ramps, walkways, drives, and parking, special attention shall be given to location and number of access points to the public streets (especially in relation to existing traffic**

controls and mass transit facilities), width of interior drives and access points, general interior circulation, separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, access to community facilities, and arrangement of vehicle parking and bicycle parking areas, including bicycle parking spaces required by Section 6.1.12 that are safe and convenient and, insofar as practicable, do not detract from the use and enjoyment of proposed buildings and structures and the neighboring properties.

There are no parking spaces associated with the storefront at 1306-1308 Massachusetts Avenue and a parking plan was not submitted as part of the EDR application. The new office use requires seven spaces with two short-term bike parking spaces and two long term bike parking spaces; therefore, the proposal requires relief from the Zoning Bylaw parking requirement. The site is adjacent to available on-street vehicle parking along Massachusetts Avenue. The Board may consider requiring interior bike parking and/or bike storage on site.

**5. EDR-5 Surface Water Drainage**

Special attention shall be given to proper site surface drainage so that removal of surface waters will not adversely affect neighboring properties or the public storm drainage system. Available Best Management Practices for the site should be employed, and include site planning to minimize impervious surface and reduce clearing and re-grading. Best Management Practices may include erosion control and stormwater treatment by means of swales, filters, plantings, roof gardens, native vegetation, and leaching catch basins. Stormwater should be treated at least minimally on the development site; that which cannot be handled on site shall be removed from all roofs, canopies, paved and pooling areas and carried away in an underground drainage system. Surface water in all paved areas shall be collected in intervals so that it will not obstruct the flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic and will not create puddles in the paved areas.

In accordance with Section 3.3.4., the Board may require from any applicant, after consultation with the Director of Public Works, security satisfactory to the Board to insure the maintenance of all stormwater facilities such as catch basins, leaching catch basins, detention basins, swales, etc. within the site. The Board may use funds provided by such security to conduct maintenance that the applicant fails to do.

The Board may adjust in its sole discretion the amount and type of financial security such that it is satisfied that the amount is sufficient to provide for any future maintenance needs.

There will be no changes to the exterior of the building or surface water run-off as a result of this proposal. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**6. EDR-6 Utilities Service**

**Electric, telephone, cable TV, and other such lines of equipment shall be underground. The proposed method of sanitary sewage disposal and solid waste disposal from all buildings shall be indicated.**

There will be no changes to the utility service as a result of this proposal. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**7. EDR-7 Advertising Features**

**The size, location, design, color, texture, lighting and materials of all permanent signs and outdoor advertising structures or features shall not detract from the use and enjoyment of proposed buildings and structures and the surrounding properties.**

The project is in the Business Sign District. The proposal does not include a complete sign package but does show dimensions for future signage. The proposal does not indicate whether the sign is internally illuminated, nor does it show gooseneck or other external sign illumination. The signage as proposed will not detract from the use and enjoyment of buildings, structures, and surrounding properties. The Board can find this condition is met

**8. EDR-8 Special Features**

**Exposed storage areas, exposed machinery installations, service areas, truck loading areas, utility buildings and structures, and similar accessory areas and structures shall be subject to such setbacks, screen plantings or other screening methods as shall reasonably be required to prevent their being incongruous with the existing or contemplated environment and the surrounding properties.**

There will be no adverse impacts on light, air and water resources, or on noise and temperature levels. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**9. EDR-9 Safety**

**With respect to personal safety, all open and enclosed spaces shall be designed to facilitate building evacuation and maximize accessibility by fire, police and other emergency personnel and equipment. Insofar as practicable, all exterior spaces and interior public and semi-public spaces shall be so designed to minimize the fear and probability of personal harm or injury by increasing the potential surveillance by neighboring residents and passersby of any accident or attempted criminal act.**

The renovation of the space at 645 Massachusetts Avenue will conform to code requirements for safety and accessibility by emergency personnel and equipment. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**10. EDR-10 Heritage**

**With respect to Arlington's heritage, removal or disruption of historic, traditional or significant uses, structures or architectural elements shall be minimized insofar as**

**practical whether these exist on the site or on adjacent properties.**

1306-1308 Massachusetts Avenue is not listed on the *Inventory of Historically or Architecturally Significant Properties in the Town of Arlington*. The Board can find this condition is met.

**11. EDR-11 Microclimate**

**With respect to the localized climatic characteristics of a given area, any development which proposes new structures, new hard surface, ground coverage or the installation of machinery which emits heat, vapor or fumes shall endeavor to minimize insofar as practicable, any adverse impacts on light, air and water resources or on noise and temperature levels of the immediate environment.**

There are no proposed changes (new structures, hard surface, ground coverage, or machinery) that will impact the microclimate. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**12. EDR-12 Sustainable Building and Site Design**

**Projects are encouraged to incorporate best practices related to sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, and indoor environmental quality. Applicants must submit a current Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) checklist, appropriate to the type of development, annotated with narrative description that indicates how the LEED performance objectives will be incorporated into the project.**

The construction will be primarily indoors, and will prioritize energy efficient HVAC systems, plumbing fixtures, LED fixtures, and products incorporating low/no VOCs and recycled content. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**IV. Conditions**

1. The final sign, exterior material, and lighting plans shall be approved by the ARB and/or the Department of Planning and Community Development. Any substantial or material deviation during construction from the approved plans and specifications is subject to the written approval of the Arlington Redevelopment Board
2. Any substantial or material deviation during construction from the approved plans and specifications is subject to the approval of the Arlington Redevelopment Board.
3. The Board maintains continuing jurisdiction over this permit and may, after a duly advertised public hearing, attach other conditions or modify these conditions as it deems appropriate in order to protect the public interest and welfare.

4. Snow removal from all parts of the site, as well as from any abutting public sidewalks, shall be the responsibility of the owner and shall be accomplished in accordance with Town Bylaws.
5. Trash shall be picked up only on Monday through Friday between the hours of 7:00 am and 6:00 pm. All exterior trash and storage areas on the property, if any, shall be properly screened and maintained in accordance with the Town Bylaws.
6. Upon the issuance of the building permit the Applicant shall file with the Inspectional Services Department and the Police Department the names and telephone numbers of contact personnel who may be reached 24 hours each day during the construction period.